

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the amendments and remarks herein, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 5, 12 and 19 have been cancelled herein. Thus, claims 1-4, 6-11, 13-18 and 20-21 are pending for further examination.

Claims 1-21 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Muratani. Applicant respectfully submits that the amended claims herein are not anticipated by Muratani. Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Muratani does not embed watermark information in a frequency domain but rather in a pixel value domain. To do so, a pixel value variation calculation section is provided to calculate the variation of a pixel value at each point in the pixel value domain from the position into which watermark information is to be embedded and the variation of a frequency component value at that position (see column 7, lines 16-30). Claim 4 of Muratani recites that watermark information is embedded in a frequency domain at a position determined irrespective of frequency component value. As described in the reference, the position is determined, for example, by setting a fixed position in the frequency domain (see column 8, line 51 to column 9, line 13). Furthermore, Muratani describes that the frequency component value's variation is implemented by an embedding intensity λ . Embedding intensity λ is set to have a value larger than a typical frequency component value (column 19, lines 42-65), and is selected for each user differently, using the information unique to the user (column 20, lines 26-29).

Thus, in Muratani, watermark information is embedded in a frequency domain at a predetermined, fixed position as a variation larger than a typical frequency component value. That is, watermark information is embedded in a frequency domain at a predetermined position as a predetermined variation.

In contrast, the claimed invention differs from Muratani in that an area's feature value is used to determine a range in variation of a pixel value and within that determined range the value of the pixel included in the area is varied. This feature has been added to the independent claims herein and is not disclosed or suggested in Muratani.

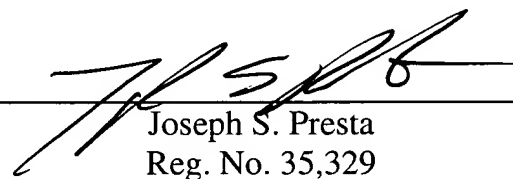
In view of the foregoing, Applicant believes that the pending claims clearly and patentably distinguish Muratani and are in condition for allowance. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this application, or deem that any formal matters need to be addressed prior to allowance, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the phone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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